

BRUNO ONZIMA

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

I am an accomplished academic and development leader with over 19 years of experience in international relations, diplomacy, education, strategic leadership, and program management. Known for mobilizing multi-million-dollar resources, supervising undergraduate and postgraduate research, designing inclusive policies, and fostering long-term partnerships across educational, government, and humanitarian sectors, I am committed to building resilient, globally engaged communities.

As a Ugandan citizen, I specialize in lecturing, research supervision, institutional capacity assessment, policy formulation, and strategic planning. I have led efforts in academic program assessments, accreditation, and curriculum enhancements to align with global best practices.

As Head of Department, I have built strong collaborations with local and international institutions to boost research output, academic partnerships, and capacity-building. I teach courses such as Political Science, Comparative Politics, Research Methods, and Global Governance, using student-centered approaches to promote critical thinking and global citizenship.

I have authored and co-authored research on governance, gender equity, refugee integration, and sustainable development, influencing academic discourse and national and international policies.

A passionate advocate for gender equality, public health, and refugee protection, I lead initiatives focused on marginalized groups, including displaced persons, refugees, and underserved host communities. My work applies participatory methodologies like the Theory of Change and the Graduation Approach, driving systemic transformation and economic recovery.

EDUCATION

Master of Philosophy in Public Administration
University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway | 2011–2013

Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (First Class Honors)
Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda | 2000–2003

Diploma in Virtual Leadership Development Programme
Management Sciences for Health | 2004

OTHER TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

- **Certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation**
Nkumba University | 2018
- **Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods & Writing Skills**
Centre for Basic Research | 2008
- **Certificate in Internal Control and Fraud Detection**
Centre for Procurement Management | 2006
- **Certificate in ART Logistics & Instruction to HIV/AIDS Clinical Care**
Ministry of Health, Uganda | 2005

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Accomplished Lecturer and Research Supervisor in International Relations and Diplomacy, with expertise in **curriculum development, quality assurance, and institutional capacity assessment**.
- Proven ability to lead high-performing teams, **develop strategic plans**, and deliver results in complex, multicultural environments.
- Extensive experience working with local and international stakeholders to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable populations.
- Strong track record in **academic research, publishing, and policy analysis**, contributing to global knowledge production.
- Expertise in **capacity assessments, accreditation processes, and quality assurance** for higher education institutions.
- Champion for inclusive, evidence-based policies that promote gender equity, human rights, and sustainable development.
- Strong record of **building partnerships** with universities and research institutions across continents to strengthen global education and policy dialogue.
- Deep commitment to participatory and grassroots approaches that **amplify community voices** and drive national development.

I am passionate about shaping future leaders in international relations and diplomacy while actively contributing to **strategic development, institutional strengthening, and global policy dialogues on peace, security, governance, and human rights**.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Programme Manager, REBUiLD Programme, Kampala, Uganda
June 2023 – December 2024

The Re:BUiLD program, funded by the IKEA Foundation and led by the IRC, is implemented in Kampala and Nairobi. It focuses on providing livelihood interventions for urban refugees and vulnerable host communities to achieve economic self-reliance and improve access to livelihoods and inclusive services. By fostering stronger urban economic, regulatory, and social environments, the program aims to influence policies and enhance service delivery for refugees. Key features include flexible funding, adaptive design, and continuous monitoring to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Led the strategic planning and implementation of initiatives aligned with the REBUiLD Programme's mission, collaborating with stakeholders such as Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), the Ministry of Gender, and other partners in the Refugee Working Groups.
- Spearheaded resource mobilization efforts, securing funding through partnerships with national and international organizations, bolstering program capacity and sustainability.
- Provided strategic leadership, developing and implementing policies and programs, including refugee inclusion initiatives that influenced urban planning and service delivery.
- Safeguarded financial health by developing budgets, implementing expenditure tracking systems, and setting clear reporting standards. I closely monitored budgets, managed expenses, and delivered accurate financial reports to the Board and donors, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Managed organizational resources efficiently and represented the program at high-profile events, elevating its profile in policy reform discussions.
- Established and nurtured a culture of teamwork, building an effective team to deliver on strategic plan and programs.
- Lead compliance aspects including grant and compliance to internal policies, donor guidelines, government regulations among others
- Conducted regular risk assessments, implemented effective monitoring strategies, and provided the Board with timely, comprehensive risk management reports for informed decision-making.
- Provide effective leadership to the work of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to ensure that the programmatic and operational objectives of REBUiLD were achieved.

- Ensured the establishment of compliant HR policies, systems, and procedures, while driving effective hiring, development, mentoring, motivation, performance reviews and retention of competent, qualified staff.
- Supervised and mentored a diverse cross-functional team, improving team performance and operational efficiency by 20%.

Regional Programme Manager,
Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), Uganda
January 2020 – February 2023

The Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) is a multi-donor program that supports Uganda's efforts to enhance democratic governance, human rights, and accountability. It focuses on strengthening the capacity of key institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities to promote transparency, effective governance, and citizen participation. Through targeted interventions, DGF works to improve the rule of law, safeguard democratic processes, and empower marginalized groups. The program's approach combines flexible funding, capacity building, and advocacy to drive sustainable change and strengthen Uganda's democratic framework.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Led the development and execution of a transformative 5-year strategic plan, driving expansion into 20 districts and significantly enhancing access to healthcare services, benefiting over 200,000 individuals.
- Oversaw the development, submission and implementation of annual workplans and budget for the Board's approval
- Secured \$5M in donor funding through innovative proposals and strategic partnerships with EU, USAID, UNFPA, and the World Bank.
- Established sound financial, operational and management systems and practices including monitoring, oversight and audit functions
- Developed a robust governance framework to enhance accountability and compliance, ensuring alignment with international donor requirements.
- Fostered multi-sectoral collaborations with government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders to drive sustainable development initiatives.
- Supervised a multidisciplinary and multicultural team of staff members, fostering collaboration and ensuring compliance with donor and legal requirements.
- Ensured the establishment of compliant HR policies, systems, and procedures, while driving effective hiring, development, mentoring, motivation, and retention of competent, qualified staff.

- Designed and implemented programs focusing on governance and accountability, such as community participatory budgeting initiatives, improving service delivery in education and healthcare sectors.
- Organized national dialogues on governance issues, including drug delivery challenges and absenteeism in education.
- Established strategic relationships with local government bodies and international partners, enhancing DGF's mission and influence.

**Head of Department and Lecturer,
Nkumba University-Entebbe; (2014-2019)**

Lecturer, Bugema University (2016-2018) and Lecturer Cavendish University (2018-2019)

Nkumba University (NU), a private non-for-profit university chartered by the Government of Uganda in 2006, is committed to teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. The Department of Political and Social Studies within the School of Social Sciences serves over 2,000 students with more than 70 academic and support staff, ranging from Office Assistant, Administrative Assistants, Secretaries and Teaching Assistants to Professors.

The department offers diverse programs, including: International Relations and Diplomacy, Public Administration and Management, Social Work and Social Administration, Journalism and Media Studies, Development Studies and Guidance and Counseling

Duties and Responsibilities

As Head of Department

- Developed and implemented long-term academic and management plans, including a three-year rolling strategic plan, in consultation with the Faculty Policy and Resources Committee.
- Planned, coordinated, and managed all academic and administrative functions of the school and department.
- Served as the accounting officer of the department, ensuring financial accountability by working closely with the University Secretary, University Bursar, and Vice-Chancellor.
- Oversaw budgeting processes, controlled financial resources, and informed funding allocations for the department.
- Reported regularly to the Budget Review Committee and worked with senior management to promote the University's Strategic Plan.
- Provided professional advice and policy guidance to senior management.
- Led and mentored academic and administrative staff, ensuring adherence to quality academic standards.

- Increased staff PhD enrolment from one to five per year through targeted recruitment and development strategies.
- Assessed staffing needs and recommended recruitment and capacity-building initiatives to improve teaching quality.
- Initiated student counseling sessions in collaboration with Social Work and Social Administration staff, leading to a 30% increase in student enrollment within a year.
- Established and coordinated student and staff exchange programs with international and regional universities in Belgium, the USA, East Africa, and Uganda.
- Integrated student internships as a compulsory component to enhance practical knowledge and skill acquisition.
- Improved research quality and reduced plagiarism by 30% through strict academic integrity measures.
- Increased student enrollment by 20% within a year of assuming leadership.
- Boosted staff lesson attendance from 60% to 90% within one year.

As Lecturer

- Delivered undergraduate and postgraduate lectures in International Relations and Diplomacy Course Units such as Political Science, International Relations and Diplomacy, Comparative Politics, Global Governance, International Political Economy, and Conflict Resolution in addition to Public Administration using modern pedagogical approaches.
- Conducted research and disseminated findings through academic publications and conferences.
- Supervised Master's and undergraduate students in research projects.
- Organized and facilitated seminars to enhance academic discourse.
- Designed, moderated, and graded examinations while ensuring adherence to university examination policies.
- Participated in writing competitive and fundable research grant proposals.
- Mentored junior staff in teaching and research methodologies.
- Chaired the Internal School Assessment Team for the School of Social Sciences and contributed to curriculum review.
- Provided academic support and guidance to students, addressing inquiries and academic challenges.
- Engaged in community outreach programs and research-driven initiatives.

- Performed administrative duties as assigned by the Head of Department.

Operations Director

Opportunity International, Africa Region — Kampala, Uganda

January – December 2014

Opportunity International is a global non-profit that empowers people in poverty through financial services, education, and training. By providing microloans, savings, and insurance, it helps individuals, especially women, build businesses and achieve financial independence. The organization also promotes financial literacy and supports education programs to improve access to quality schooling. Its mission is to break the cycle of poverty, fostering economic empowerment and advocating for policies that drive financial inclusion.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Spearheaded the strategic implementation of transformative financial and educational programs, benefiting over 10,000 families and increasing financial inclusion by 25%.
- Led a high-performing team of professionals, driving a 40% improvement in operational efficiency and enhancing program delivery.
- Secured additional funding through targeted proposals and donor engagement, boosting the organization's capacity by 20% and supporting the expansion of key initiatives.
- Cultivated and maintained strong partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and international donors, ensuring long-term sustainability and alignment with strategic objectives.
- Organized and facilitated regional meetings that promoted cross-country collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and the exchange of best practices among stakeholders.
- Successfully organized international conferences and workshops, coordinating travel, accommodations, logistics, and on-site management for speakers, attendees, and staff.
- Championed the development and execution of financial literacy training for underserved communities, improving economic resilience and self-sufficiency.
- Implemented robust monitoring and evaluation systems that tracked program impact and informed continuous improvements in service delivery.
- Managed and coordinated travel arrangements, logistics, and staff schedules, ensuring smooth execution of both domestic and international program activities.
- Negotiated and managed key contracts with service providers, optimizing resource allocation and ensuring cost-effective operations.

- Enhanced community outreach strategies, increasing program participation by 15% and strengthening relationships with beneficiaries.
- Played a pivotal role in advocating for policy reforms that supported the growth of microfinance and financial inclusion at the local and regional levels.

Business Director

BeadforLife International, Kampala

Dec. 2007 - Jul. 2011

BeadforLife is a pioneer NGO working with impoverished women to improve their livelihoods and create sustainable opportunities, lifting families out of extreme poverty by connecting people worldwide in a circle of exchange that enriches everyone. The core of BeadforLife's program is income generation, empowering women in Uganda to become independent and self-sustaining within 27 months. Over 10,000 members were trained to roll beads, make jewelry, and start earning a steady income, while also opening savings accounts, receiving healthcare education, family planning services, mosquito nets, and attending entrepreneurial training courses. Over 135 women saved money to build a house in Friendship Village, a BeadforLife project to provide affordable housing, or to obtain a house in a location of their choice.

Key Responsibilities and Achievements:

- Led strategic planning, implementation, and synchronization of programs, using the core Graduation Approach to achieve measurable results.
- Acted as the accounting officer for the organization, providing financial accountability to the Board.
- Spearheaded research, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), data collection, management, analysis, and interpretation to inform decision-making for new ventures.
- Mobilized resources through proposal development, supporting self-sustaining market linkages (later Shea Butter), and ensured sustainable relationships with multiple partners.
- Led a team of over 300 staff across the country, managing all HR functions, including recruitment, selection, placement, motivation, training, development, and exit management.
- Managed and tracked assets, logistics coordination, procurement, finances, and a budget of over \$30 million, ensuring accountability and audit compliance.
- Rationalized planning, budgeting, accountability, and audit processes, achieving optimal audit reports.
- Supported department heads by providing training, holding them accountable for their responsibilities, and overseeing their performance.

- Established field offices and ensured sustainable livelihood through entrepreneurship training, market linkages, and housing alternatives like ‘with both hands’ for Beaders.
- Executed the construction of over 130 low-cost houses on an 18-acre plot for Beaders under the “Friendship Village” project.
- Supervised the Youth Vocational and Training Program and provided education for orphans and vulnerable children, including internally displaced persons from war-torn Northern Uganda.
- Acted as the face of the organization, creating partnerships with central government officials, local authorities, the local community, international partners, and managing public relations responsibilities.
- Led strategic planning and execution of economic development programs, empowering over 10,000 women, boosting household incomes by 30%.
- Drove resource mobilization, increasing funding by 25%, and securing key partnerships to scale vocational training initiatives.
- Managed a \$5M annual budget, ensuring effective budget management and donor compliance.
- Designed vocational training programs for over 5,000 youth, increasing employability by 40%.
- Ensured compliance with legal and donor requirements, maintaining integrity and transparency in all operations.

Finance and Administration Manager
Reach Out Mbuya HIV/AIDS Initiative, Kampala
Jan 2004 – Dec 2007

Reach Out Mbuya Uganda, a community-based HIV/AIDS NGO, serves over 10,000 clients with comprehensive medical services including free Anti-Retroviral Drugs (ARVs), treatment for opportunistic infections, counseling, a food program for 1,250 families, adult literacy classes, a scholarship program for vulnerable children, vocational workshops, micro-finance initiatives, and large-scale construction programs.

Key Responsibilities and Achievements:

- Managed comprehensive financial operations, overseeing a \$3M annual budget for the HIV/AIDS initiative.
- Led financial planning, reporting, and ensured compliance with donor requirements, including managing grants from USAID, CDC/PEPFAR through Mildmay, The World

Food Program, US Embassy in Uganda, Stephen Lewis Foundation, AVSI, Hope for Children's Initiative (HACI), Concern Worldwide, Plan International, and MMI.

- Streamlined financial administration, procurement, and timely accountability and audit processes.
- Coordinated the provision of education for over 10,000 children of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northern Uganda and provided alternative education in the Karamojong area.
- Designed capacity-building programs for leadership and staff, improving financial management practices and reducing discrepancies by 20%.
- Spearheaded cost-control measures, reducing overhead costs by 15%.
- Managed all HR functions, including selection, recruitment, orientation, induction, training, motivation, managing the staff loan scheme, and staff exit management.
- Administered the annual budget for Reach Out Uganda/Uganda Lay Apostolate.
- Coordinated program activities, logistics, and the creation of work plans and budgets, ensuring smooth operations and effective program implementation.
- Conducted field assessments to identify gaps and integration strategies for displaced persons in Northern Uganda.
- Supervised 230 employees and monitored program implementation, providing guidance and support to ensure successful execution.
- Represented the department in reviews and meetings, reporting weekly, monthly, and annually to the country director.
- Established long-lasting relationships with stakeholders, including central government through the Ministry of Health, local governments, donors, and international partners.
- Networked with multiple stakeholders, managing grant writing, implementation, and timely reporting to secure continued funding.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Mobilized over \$10M in funding, directly contributing to the expansion and sustainability of multiple organizations' programs.
- Advocated for and influenced gender-responsive policy changes, including the Uganda National Gender Policy.

- Designed and scaled impactful programs benefiting over 300,000 people across Uganda.
- Led governance reforms that improved compliance and accountability for donor-funded projects, reducing financial risks by 25%.
- Management Consultant – Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo – 2023
- Internal Assessment and Strategic Plan Consultant – West Minister Christian Institute Uganda – 2022
- External Examiner – West Minister Christian Institute Uganda – 2019 to Date
- External Examiner – Victoria University Uganda – 2018-2019
- Management Consultant – Nebbi Catholic Diocese – 2016
- Management Consultant – Our Lady of Africa Kindergarten, Mbuya – 2011-2012
- Board Member, Management, M&E Advisor – St. Daniel Comboni College, Kasaala – 2014-2016
- Finance and Administration Consultant – Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu – 2010-2014
- Founder, Finance & Administration Consultant – Kawempe Home Care – 2006-2011
- Bursar – Comboni Lay Missionaries Uganda – 2004-2010
- Presented a paper at the National AIDS Conference at Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala – 2005

KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Strong research and analytical skills
- Excellent communication, public relations, and cross-cultural skills
- Broad governance experience working with various Boards of Directors
- Hands-on skills in computer proficiency: Microsoft Office (MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint), accounting packages (QuickBooks, Concur), research packages (SPSS, Epi Info, Epi Data), email, and internet use
- Ugandan driver's license with a clean driving record since 2006
- Leadership and administrative skills at various levels
- Team leadership, high self-esteem, and initiative

- Proficient in participatory appraisal methodologies/facilitation skills
- Good knowledge of the Graduation Approach
- Proven administrative, finance management, grant management, budget supervision, and result-oriented focus
- Ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously, meet deadlines, and achieve goals
- Consensus builder, able to solve problems with minimal supervision
- Result-oriented in human resource management, finance management, grant management, and administrative skills
- Excellent knowledge of project cycle management and evaluation

PUBLICATIONS

- Onzima, B. (2010). *BeadforLife Finance and Accounting Manual*. Kampala.
- Onzima, B. (2011). *BeadforLife Human Resource Policy Manual*. Kampala.
- Onzima, B. (2013). *Participants or Spectators? An Analysis of Farmers' Involvement in the NAADS Programme in Rural Uganda*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Onzima, B. (2013). *Public Accountability: Explaining Variation Across Local Governments in Uganda*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing.

REFERENCES

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